

Week Ending Friday, May 21, 1993

**Exchange With Reporters Prior to
Discussions With President Mary
Robinson of Ireland**
May 14, 1993

Ireland

Q. Madam President, do you support a peace envoy from the United States to Ireland?

President Robinson. I think it has been very much appreciated, as indeed the Taoiseach said when he met with the President on March the 17th, on St. Patrick's Day, that President Clinton has shown such an interest in and concern for Ireland. That is very well recognized in Ireland itself and that, as President, you have indicated a genuine, a real concern. And I know that when you were discussing with the Taoiseach the idea of a peace envoy that you left open this issue, because it expresses concern, and that you are aware that there are the prospects of resumed talks in Northern Ireland. And I think in those circumstances—and it is appropriate to let those talks take their course.

But the sounding of the concern, the genuine interest, and the fact that you said you were a friend not just on St. Patrick's Day but throughout the year in an interested way, that has struck a very real chord throughout the island of Ireland and an important one. And I think that's very much appreciated, now. So I think that the reality of that concern has created its own very helpful and constructive vibrations.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Perception of the Administration

Q. Mr. President, you sounded a little bit frustrated at the end of your news conference there with the perception of your administration and your Presidency.

President Clinton. I just did what I could to set the record straight. You know, in the end you're measured by whether you act or not and what you stand for and what you

don't, and I think the record is pretty clear. This administration has come out for a lot of bold and comprehensive change and is fighting for it. And if I don't say that, who will?

Q. That may be the question. *[Laughter]*

President Clinton. We haven't lost a majority vote yet. We may before it's over, but we haven't yet.

Ireland

Q. President Clinton, can I ask you a question? Are you going to visit Ireland? You're meeting the President today. Would you like—

President Clinton. I hope so. I told the President I went to Ireland once when I was a young man.

Q. 1969?

President Clinton. It was a great trip.

Q. Do you think you're going to be able to do it?

President Clinton. Did you check my passport files? Is that how you—*[laughter]*.

Q. Would you like to visit Ireland?

President Clinton. I would very much.

The First 100 Days

Q. Can I ask you about your first 100 days in office? Have you enjoyed that?

President Clinton. Very much. Even the difficult times have been good. You know, it's an exhilarating thing trying to sort of turn things around, not easy but exhilarating.

Jerry Adams

Q. Mr. President, you've gotten some heat over your Irish problems recently. Do you think looking back on what you said during the campaign and knowing what you know now about, for example, the Jerry Adams status, that you might have rephrased what you were saying?

President Clinton. Well, what I said was—and I did do that—I asked the State Department to review the case and I gave the—and other Agencies did so as well. He

is no longer a member of Parliament, which is what I take my statement on. And they unanimously recommended that the visa not be granted. I have no grounds to overrule them.

Lani Guinier

Q. Mr. President, at your press conference today on the Lani Guinier question, you seem to suggest—please correct me if I'm wrong—but that it's simply a matter of Congress confirming her and her doing—or, excuse me, the Senate confirming her and her doing Congress' will as it relates to the Civil Rights Division. But her writings suggest a very interesting interpretation of things like the Voting Rights Act, which she would extend to the executive branch, numerical goals for judicial appointments, which I believe you opposed in your campaign. So what is the Senate, then, to make of the fact that you've sent somebody up there that favors things that you oppose?

President Clinton. Well listen, I would never have appointed anybody to public office if they had to agree with everything I believe in. We wouldn't have a Cabinet. I mean, I take it, based on my personal experience, you will believe me when I say I am confident that she'll follow the Constitution and the laws of the United States. You have to swear an oath of office to that. She may wish the law were different in some areas. But I've had personal experience with her accomplishments as a civil rights lawyer, and I thought we ought to have a distinguished civil rights lawyer as head of the Civil Rights Division. And I say again, the Congress passes the laws and the executive branch enforces them, and when there is a question of policy, that will be resolved by the Attorney General.

Q. Are you disassociating yourself from her writings, sir?

President Clinton. I never have associated myself with all of her writings or all of anybody else's. I even found a word or two in the Vice President's book I didn't agree with. [*Laughter*]

Ireland

Q. President Robinson, what is your message to President Clinton? What is your message to President Clinton today?

President Robinson. Well, it is certainly a very special occasion to come here as President of Ireland and to be welcomed by President Clinton. And I want to reiterate the invitation that has already been extended to him by the Taoiseach to renew his acquaintanceship with Dublin and to come to Ireland on an appropriate occasion. And I want to express appreciation of the fact that President Clinton has clearly signaled an interest in and an active concern for Ireland, for the modern Ireland, the Ireland which I have the honor to represent and that you and your administration are keeping in very close contact, that there is a very open communication and a sense of that, and that has been very consciously realized in Ireland itself and throughout the island of Ireland. And I think it is a very significant and helpful factor in our relations.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In her remarks, President Robinson referred to Albert Reynolds, Prime Minister of Ireland. Jerry Adams is the leader of Sinn Féin. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

May 15, 1993

Good morning. As we all rejoice in this magnificent spring and the promise of renewal that it brings, we should also feel renewed as citizens, renewed by the progress that is being made in Washington, the progress we are making in strengthening the American economy to help us be more competitive, to grow, to work for the middle class again. Gridlock is on the way out, and our plan to rebuild the economy and restore opportunity for all Americans is moving through Congress.

Look at the progress. Just 3 months ago, I submitted to Congress a balanced economic plan that asked everyone to work together to invest a little more in deficit reduction today, so that we can all enjoy better jobs and higher incomes tomorrow. It says we can do what no generation has ever been